

Purpose and Need Statement

CUY-Opportunity Corridor Study, PID No. 77333

Cuyahoga County, Ohio

May 12, 2011

Introduction

The Opportunity Corridor study area is located within the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The study area stretches from I-490/I-77/E. 55th Street in the west to E. 105th/Chester Avenue in the east (**Figure 1, Appendix A**). This document presents the purpose statement and need elements for the proposed action.

Purpose Statement

The purpose is to improve the transportation infrastructure, access and mobility within a historically underserved, economically depressed area within the City of Cleveland.

Need Elements

The proposed action must address the following need elements:

- Improve system linkage
- Improve mobility
- Support planned economic development

System Linkage

There is a lack of access to and from the Interstate System and University Circle for the southern and western portions of the Cleveland metro area. Chester Avenue (US 322), Euclid Avenue (US 20), and Carnegie Avenue are the only transportation corridors providing direct connections between these areas (**Figure 1, Appendix A**). As a result, motorists traveling from the south via I-71 and I-77 must merge onto the Cleveland Innerbelt (I-90) and travel through the Central Business District (CBD) before gaining access to University Circle. Movements between the Interstate System and University Circle have been further impeded by recent capacity reductions on two of these primary access routes. Carnegie Avenue previously consisted of six changeable lanes, which could be configured to provide up to four directional lanes during peak travel periods. In 2005, however, Carnegie Avenue was reconfigured to provide two fixed lanes in each direction with a continuous center lane for left turns. This reconfiguration eliminated up to two directional lanes providing access to and from University Circle. In 2008, two exclusive bus lanes were constructed on Euclid Avenue. In conjunction, the vehicular lanes on this primary access route were reduced from four to two.

The existing grid is missing an east-west arterial for the approximate two mile distance between Woodland Avenue and Union Avenue. As a result, there is not a direct connection to the existing north-south and diagonal roadways within the study area (**Figure 1, Appendix A**). As a result, motorists must navigate the local streets through a series of twists and turns to reach University Circle. This creates bottlenecks at the I-490/E. 55th Street and E. 55th Street/Woodland Avenue/Kinsman Road intersections. Alternately, motorists traveling on I-90 or I-490 must merge onto Cleveland's Innerbelt (I-90) and travel through the CBD to access University Circle.

Given the above, the proposed action must provide improved access between I-77 and University Circle.

Mobility

Mobility within the area bounded by the I-77 and University Circle is restricted by a lack of adequate transportation facilities for trucks. The industries in and abutting these areas were once predominantly served by rail lines. As a result, the surface streets were designed to accommodate residential and commuter travel while the rail lines provided for the movement of goods. Two active Class I railroads (CSX and Norfolk Southern) still service the study area. However, vehicular trucking has replaced rail nationally as the primary transporter of industrial goods for short-haul trips (i.e., less than 500 miles). While business in the area has been in decline, the scattered remaining industries are now predominantly serviced by trucks. Trucks accessing these industries must navigate surface streets that were not originally designed for them. Furthermore, these areas are interspersed with residences,



churches, neighborhood stores, and other uses that are not compatible with heavy, industrial truck traffic.

The closest Interstate access point for residences and business located within the study area is via I-490 at E. 55th Street. Most, if not all, traffic traveling to and from this area must pass through this intersection before dispersing among the other local roadways or the Interstate system. As a result, 2005 and 2010 traffic count information indicates that the I-490/E. 55th Street intersection operates at LOS F.

Given the above, the proposed action must provide improved mobility and acceptable levels of service for traffic traveling to, from, and within the area between I-77 and University Circle.

Economic Development

The area located between I-77 and University Circle includes a portion of the City of Cleveland that has been termed the “Forgotten Triangle.” The “Forgotten Triangle” is generally bounded by Kinsman Road, Woodland Avenue, and Woodhill Road (**Figure 1, Appendix A**). This area, which consists mainly of industrial and residential uses, is economically depressed with blighted and dilapidated buildings dominating the landscape. Over time, the loss of manufacturing jobs and other employment opportunities prompted residents to leave the area. According to information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of each neighborhood (also known as Statistical Planning Areas) within the study area has steadily declined since 1940, as shown in **Table 1**. In addition, the 1999 median household incomes for the study area neighborhoods are below the averages for the city, county and state (**Exhibit 1, page 3**). Likewise, the percentage of persons below the poverty level within the study area neighborhoods exceed the averages for the city, county, and state (**Exhibit 2, page 3**).

Table 1: Population by Study Area Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Year			% Change (1940 - 2000)
	1940	1970	2000	
Buckeye-Shaker	19,537	18,496	16,093	-18%
Central	62,038	27,280	12,107	-80%
University Circle	17,221	12,804	9,469	-45%
Fairfax	35,456	22,157	7,352	-79%
Kinsman	20,139	15,361	5,842	-71%
North Broadway	21,003	13,424	9,049	-57%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Large vacant tracts of land within the “Forgotten Triangle” and adjacent areas offer opportunities for development and redevelopment. The City of Cleveland and Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) are working toward an economic development plan for the area that is consistent with and supports the *Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan*. The City of Cleveland Planning Commission is also working with local Community Development Corporations (CDC’s) to identify specific activities within each of ten Development Districts (**Figure 2, Appendix A**) based on current development, future land use and neighborhood level plans incorporated into the *Citywide Plan*.

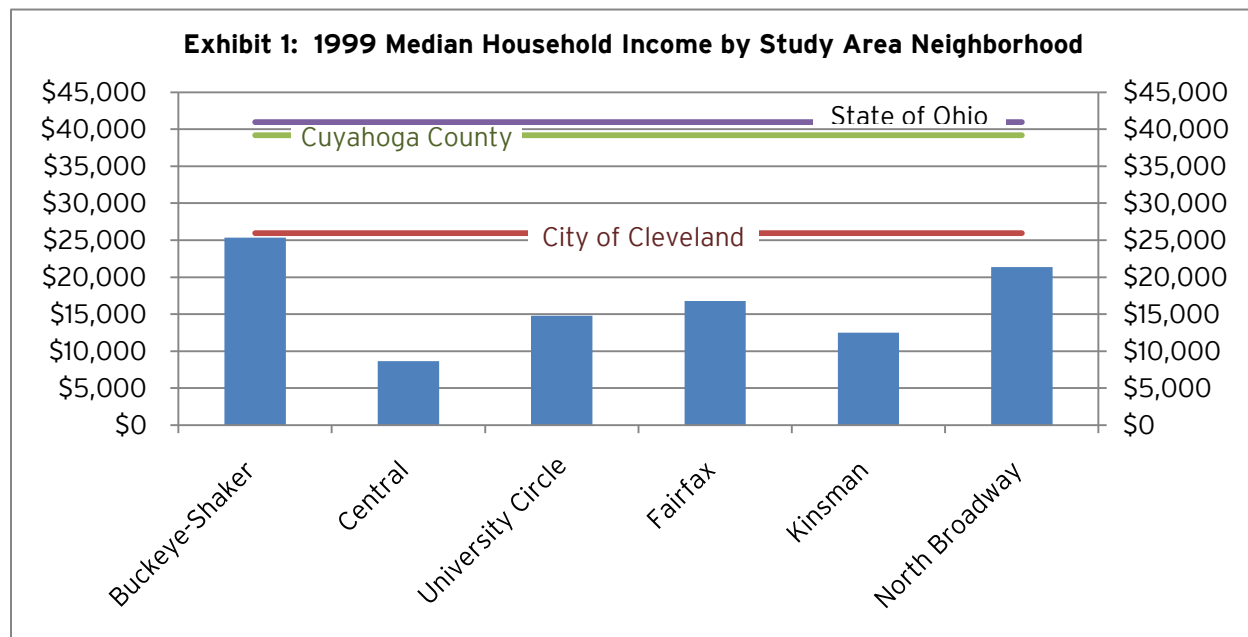
Some of the goals that have been established by the City, as described in its *Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan* and other CDC plans, include:

- Clean-up and reuse Brownfield sites
- Reuse, demolish, and reconstruct abandoned buildings
- Retain, support, or expand existing businesses, institutions, and local community developments
- Improve job opportunities for local residents

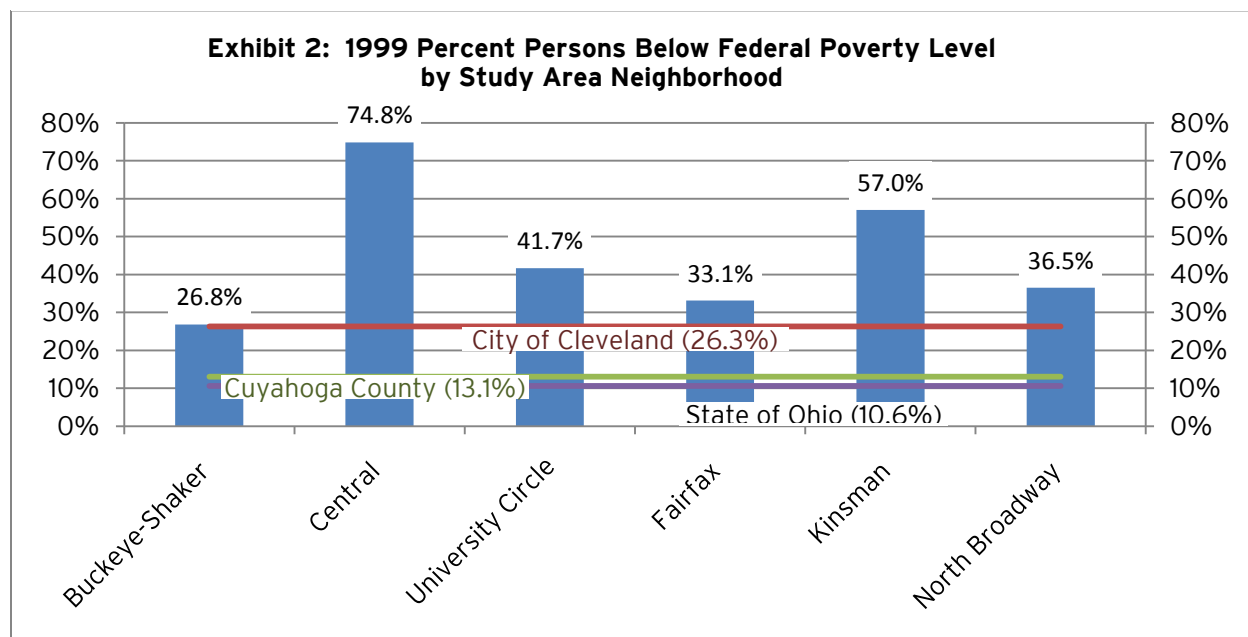
University Circle, one of the City’s major economic centers and job hubs, provides additional opportunities for economic growth within the “Forgotten Triangle” and surrounding areas. The University Circle area (excluding the Cleveland Clinic) measures about one square mile with no expansion of its area over the past fifty years. It is hemmed in by rail lines to the east and south, residential communities to the east, north, and west, and the growing Cleveland Clinic campus also to

the west. The only opportunities for long-term sustainable growth are to the southwest - within and immediately adjacent to the "Forgotten Triangle." University Circle is one area within Cleveland where job growth has occurred and is anticipated to continue in health related fields for skilled and non-skilled workers.

Given the above, the proposed action must create the transportation infrastructure to support the revival and redevelopment within the "Forgotten Triangle" and surrounding areas. In conjunction, it must provide the transportation network to support planned development and job growth from University Circle.



Source: Neighborhood Link (<http://www.nhlink.net/index.php>, accessed April 2011)



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Goals and Objectives



The following goals and objectives have been identified through a review of existing land use and transportation plans, discussions with local planning officials, and input received from those living and working within the study area. The goals and objectives identified below are not the core transportation needs the proposed action is intended to address. However, they will be used in conjunction with the need elements to evaluate the proposed action.

Public Transportation

The following Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) rapid transit stations exist within the Opportunity Corridor study area (**Figure 1, Appendix A**):

- E. 55th Street Station (Red and Blue/Green Lines)
- E. 79th Street Station (Red Line)
- E. 79th Street Station (Blue/Green Line)
- E. 105th Street/Quincy Avenue Station (Red Line)

The E. 79th Street stations have the lowest patronage on the rail system due to limited activity around the sites. A goal of the proposed action is to improve the operation of public transportation by improving connectivity to existing facilities, such as the existing GCRTA stations, and supporting redevelopment plans that will increase patronage within the system.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

In June 2002, the City of Cleveland announced its "Bicycle Friendly Cleveland Initiative" with goals to improve bicycle facilities and awareness throughout the region. Furthermore, the City of Cleveland's *Master Bikeway Plan* (June 2003) details existing and planned bikeways in the City. The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) has also developed a *Regional Bicycle Plan* (July 2004) to improve bicycle facilities within its service area.

Near the study area, there is an existing bikeway paralleling the Cuyahoga River that connects to a dedicated bikeway that runs along the lakefront. In addition, there is a bicycle circulation system on the Case Western Reserve University campus along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Plans to expand the bicycle links for local and regional circulation on the campus are currently under consideration. Finally, the planned Kingsbury Run Greenway Project includes a connector trail between the Cuyahoga River Towpath and E. 79th Street.

A goal of the proposed action is to support existing City and NOACA planning initiatives by providing multi-modal options through the inclusion of safe bicycle and pedestrian-friendly facilities. Another goal is to improve connectivity to existing and planned multi-modal facilities in and near the study area.

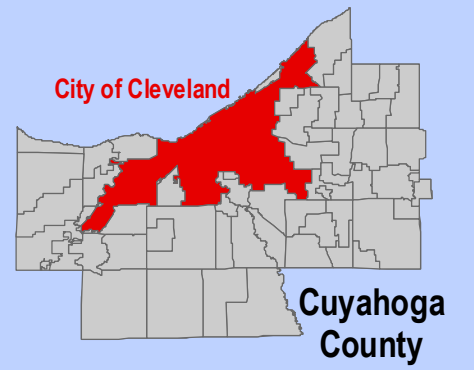
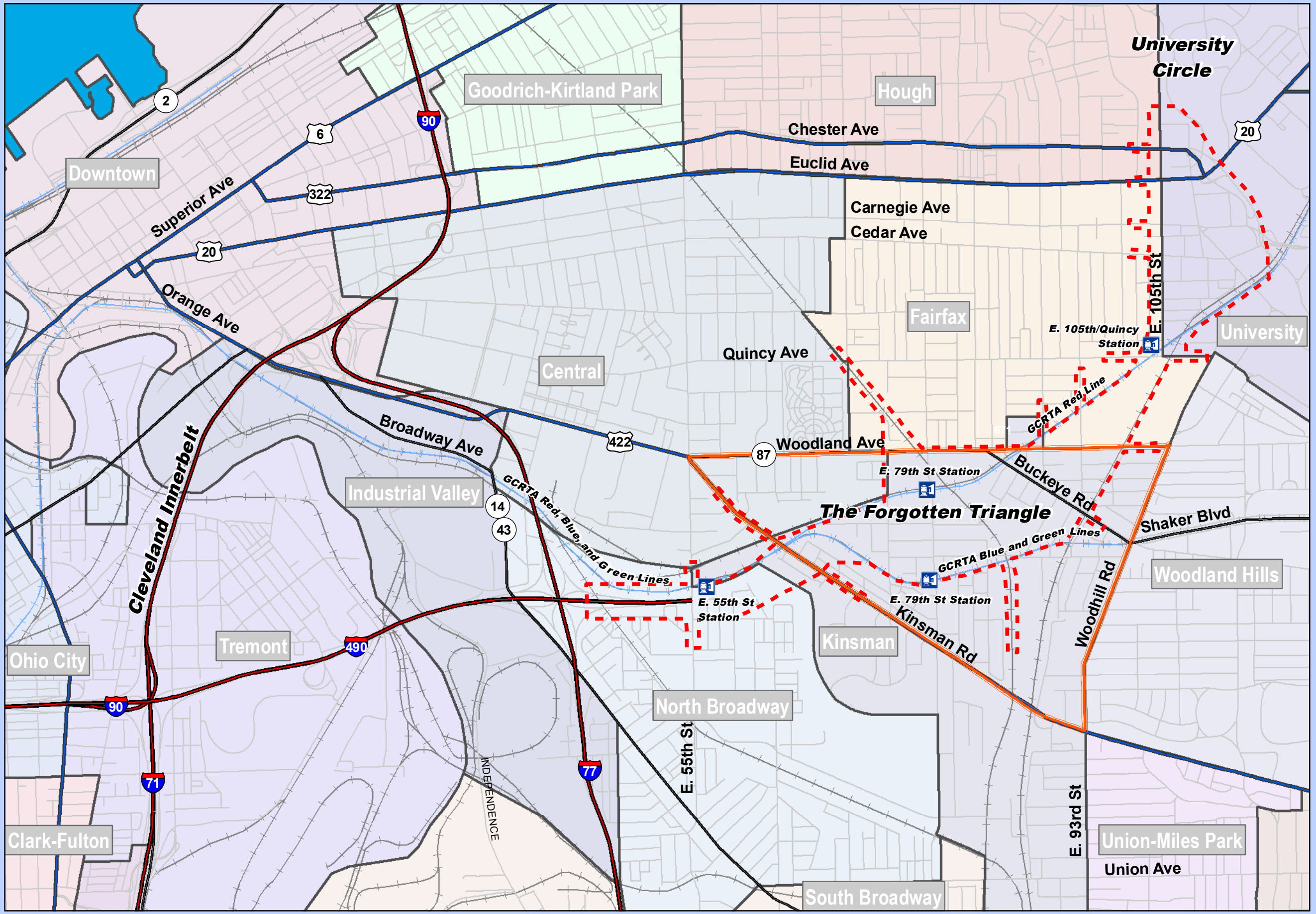
Logical Termini/Independent Utility

The logical termini for the proposed action include I-490/I-77/E. 55th Street in the west and E. 105th Street/Chester Avenue in the east (**Figure 1, Appendix A**). These termini provide sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scale as they designate the endpoints of the travel corridor for employees, patients, students, residents and tourists. Once travelers reach I-490/I-77/E. 55th Street, they can gain access to the I-77, I-71, and I-90 and connect to western and southern suburbs or the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. When travelers reach E. 105th Street/Chester Avenue, they can continue to the University Circle area or other eastern suburbs. Given the logical termini described above, transportation improvements can be developed that allow for, but do not require, future projects in the study area and in the region. The proposed action will have independent utility and will not require the implementation of other transportation improvements to result in a useful project for the traveling public.

Appendix A Figures

Figure 1: Project Location and Study Area

Figure 2: Development Districts



- Legend**
- Opportunity Corridor Study Area
 - Interstate
 - State Route
 - US Route
 - Local Street
 - GCRTA Rail Line
 - Active Freight Rail Line
 - Statistical Planning Area
 - GCRTA Station



CUY - Opportunity Corridor
(PID 77333)
Cleveland, OH

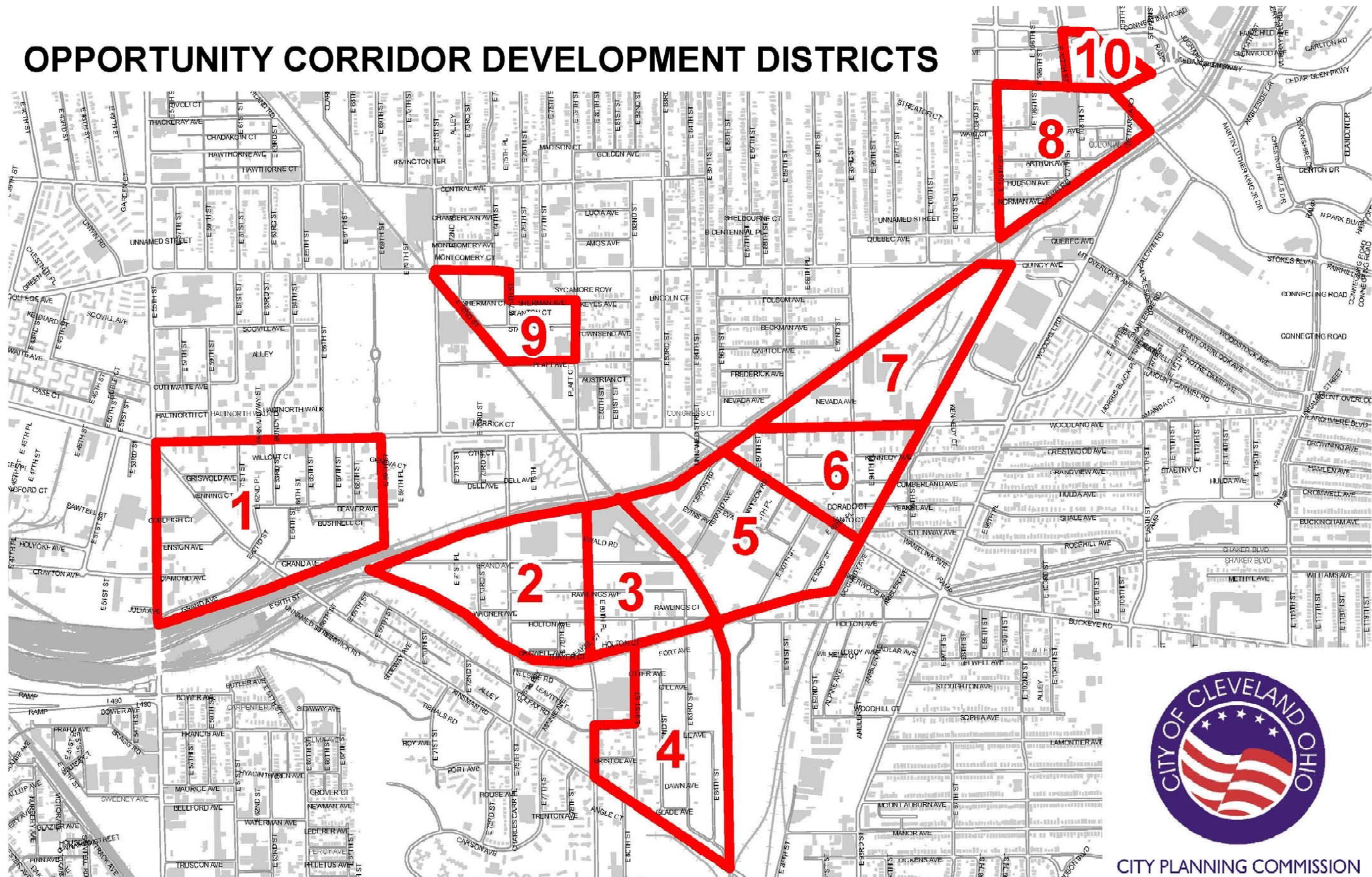
Date: 04/19/2011
Prepared by: VNW

Note:
GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes.



Figure 1: Project Location and Study Area **HNTB**

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Figure 2: Opportunity Corridor Development Districts

